

Indian Chieftain.

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THE PATENT A SAFEGUARD.

To set forth with any degree of accuracy and definiteness the status of the Indian Territory at the present time would be no small task. The changes in the political complexion of affairs here that have been prophesied for twenty years and more, are now taking place. When the end will come is a question impossible, in the very nature of things, to answer intelligently. Fifteen years ago the elder E. C. Boudinot, in a speech at the fair grounds in this city, declared that within five years from that date allotment of land would be an accomplished fact. Ten years later Col. Boudinot died, apparently as far from a realization of his dream as when he made the bold and (to him) dangerous declaration at the fair grounds.

Indian autonomy has existed for the last quarter of a century against the express wish of the United States government. Before the opening of Oklahoma to white settlement, the Indian Territory was a vast unsettled wilderness for the most part, and the rendezvous of criminals more daring and desperate than were the marauding bands of brigands that roamed the forests of England in the days of the Plantagenets. The futility of its efforts to reduce the Indian Territory to law and order was primarily the cause of a desire upon the part of congress to change the political conditions among the tribes inhabiting it. As time wore on, other and more urgent reasons for the abolition of the tribal governments presented themselves. The government of the United States was much bound to protect the Indians from each other as from outside intrusion. The utter failure of the system of holding all their lands in common began to develop itself long ago. The Indians were rapidly becoming civilized, and many of them were, practically speaking, white people with all the tastes and virtues, as well as the vices of the white race. The absurdity of maintaining such a class of people under the guise of helpless, blanket Indians at last dawned upon congress. But when an attempt was made to undo the matter, the United States government found its hands tied up by numberless treaties and agreements that left the Indians masters of the situation.

After the sale and settlement of Oklahoma and the Strip, matters grew from bad to worse. Turmoil and unrest arose among the Indians, and a strong pressure from the outside to do away with what was considered un-Americanism in principle in sustaining separate governments for the Indians in the very heart of the United States manifested itself. The first decisive action of congress along this new line of policy was the creation of the Dawes commission with authority to come to the Indian Territory and negotiate with the Indians, relative to a relinquishment of their tribal organizations. The Dawes commission came nearly five years ago, and have been assiduously laboring at the task laid out for them by congress, ever since. A great deal has been accomplished, tending to the carrying out of the purposes of the government. The United States courts were given jurisdiction over persons not connected with any of the Indian tribes, and from time to time their jurisdiction has been increased, till now the tribal courts are practically superseded and set aside altogether.

The introduction of the Curtis bill last week in congress, and the general understanding that seems to have been reached, that it or a similar measure is to become a law during the present session of congress, leaves little hope for the Indians that they will be allowed to continue much longer. However, there is one barrier in the way of completely wiping the Indians out, and that seems to be the patent to the land owned by the tribes. "Thus far shall thou go and no further," seems to be as true when applied to the efforts of congress to attack the title to Indian lands, as when applied to the sea whose billows dash in omnipotence against the barrier of the shore. After all the negotiations and investigation, and after all the threats of commissions, the title stands as firm and impregnable as the rock of Gibraltar. The final result is foreshadowed in the "Curtis bill," to get the consent of the Indians before passing the title.

THE FIVE TRIBES IN CONGRESS.

(Copyright 1898.)
ACTION ON TERRITORY BILL TO GO OVER TO FEBRUARY 15.

Work of the Town Letters—Confirmation of Cherokee Deeds Asked—General Indian Legislation Notes.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24, 1898. It was thought when the subcommittee reported the bill, that it would be taken up by the Indian affairs committee and reported to the house, without delay, but it is now learned that the committee will not take up the bill before the 10th or 15th of February. Mr. Curtis will, in the meantime, make a trip to his home in Kansas, and other members of the committee will be absent from the city; for these reasons the committee has decided to postpone action on the bill to the time indicated. In the meantime the legislative power will be allowed to "slumber down," so to speak. The various townsite delegates from the territory will remain and work, and when the committee again takes up the bill, the representative of all interests will have located the exact features they want modified, and agreed upon just what will be urged in the way of amendment.

If the people of the Indian Territory have an idea that the townsite delegates are not working and working hard; and that they are not organized, and thoroughly so; and that there is not harmony among them, and perfect harmony, they are not advised as to what their representatives are doing and have been doing. Immediately after the report of the Curtis bill was reported to the committee they called a meeting to find "where they were at." The meeting was held at the National hotel and J. J. McAlester was elected president of the same. After a full discussion of the townsite features of the bill, a committee was appointed to draft an amendment embodying the sense of the meeting. The committee was composed of J. F. McMurray, of South McAlester; Dr. Wolverton, of S. T. Bledsoe, of Ardmore; Judge Stuart, of South McAlester; and W. F. Thompson, of Tahlequah. This committee has been at work, and yesterday agreed upon amendment, which is in substance, as follows:

"That the land upon which any town is located shall be purchased from the Indians at such a price as may be agreed upon between the towns and Indians; that the chief executive officer of any town so purchased, shall plat the town; and that such plat shall be approved by and filed with the secretary of the interior; that, upon filing the plat with the secretary of the interior, the chief executive officer of the town shall appoint an officer who, with the chief executive officer, shall appraise the lots separately and apart from any improvements that may be on the same at such a relative value as the present value of the lot bears to the purchase price paid for the townsite, so that the aggregate appraised value of all the lots shall not exceed the amount paid for the entire townsite, together with the expense incurred in procuring and vesting title; that should appraisers be unable to agree upon value, the judge of the United States court shall appoint a third person not a resident of such town to assist in the appraisal; that a determination of a majority of said appraisers shall be conclusive; that any person having improvements upon any lot so appraised shall purchase at the appraised value, twenty-five per cent of such purchase to be paid in cash, and the balance in five equal installments of one, two, three, four and five years, with interest from date, at six per cent, provided, that any purchaser may have the right to pay off the same before maturity; that if any person having improvements shall not purchase the lot within six months after appraisal, the same shall be sold at public auction, at not less than appraised value; that the proceeds of such sale of lots shall be applied, first to the purchase price of the townsite, and the excess, if any, to be deposited with the secretary of the treasury for the school fund; and that all lots heretofore sold by the Cherokee nation, and to which said nation has given deeds, and for which the purchase price has been paid into the Cherokee treasury, is hereby confirmed."

At this meeting every townsite delegate in Washington was present, and the amendment just quoted is understood to be what they will insist upon, as a unit, when the committee is ready to hear them. This amendment differs from the townsite clause of the Curtis bill in two essential features, first, as to the appointment of the appraisers of lots; and second, as to the manner or basis of appraisal. The Curtis bill provides that the appraisers shall be appointed, one by the secretary of the interior, one by the chief executive officer of the town, and a third to be selected by the two; while the amendment just quoted provides that the appraisers shall consist of three, the chief executive officer of the town, an officer appointed by the town council and the third to be selected by the United States judge. As to the manner of appraisal, the Curtis bill provides that the lots shall be appraised separately and apart from the improvements on such lot, and that the owner of improvements thereon may purchase at the appraised value. This, it will be noted would make the lots cost 40 per cent more than by the Chickasaw treaty, and 5 per cent more than by the Choctaw treaty. The amendment seeks to correct this hardship of the Curtis bill, which is thought to be the result of inadvertence. Its provisions are that the lots shall be appraised separately and apart from improvements thereon, "at such a relative value as the present value of the

lot bears to the purchase price paid for the whole townsite, so that the aggregate value of all the lots shall not exceed the entire price paid for the town site;" and that the same shall be paid for, in installments of 25 per cent cash, and the remainder in five yearly payments. Another material difference carried by the amendment is the approval of the sale of lots by the Cherokee nation.

The Indian appropriation bill is completed. It carries two items of special interest to the people of the Indian Territory. The Dawes commission is reduced to three. This was done by the house Indian affairs committee at its Monday meeting, just before reporting the bill. Messrs. Little and Benton, of the committee, made a hard fight for the retention of the commission as at present organized, stating that it would be fatal work to cripple it either in numbers or salary at this time. The committee voted, however, to reduce it to three, but continued their salaries at \$5,000. As to which three of the commission will be retained will not, of course, be determined, until the end of the fiscal year, June 30th next, when the new appropriation bill becomes effective.

I am in possession of such facts as to justify me in saying, without hesitation, that the Indian Territory and Oklahoma will not be consolidated, at this session. Upon this question the people of the Indian Territory may dismiss their fears, and give the matter no further serious consideration. Senator Jones has introduced two bills this week relating to the Indian Territory. One is to extend the time for the completion of the Fort Smith and Western railroad, and the other is for the payment of arrears of interests on the Chickasaw trust funds.

Senate bill 2588, authorizing the Muskogee Coal and Railway Company to construct and operate a railway through the Indian Territory from Ft. Gibson, through the Cherokee and Creek nations, to Vernon, Texas, has passed the senate.

Governor Brown, of the Seminoles, with other delegates of that nation are here, to urge congress to ratify the treaty recently made with the Dawes commission. Judge Little has just introduced into the house a bill for that purpose. Opinion as to the ratification of this treaty is divided. While it is generally conceded that this nation should be allowed to close up its affairs, provision for which they have voluntarily made by treaty, the objection to it is that the affairs of the territory should be settled by one general, uniform law, and that to ratify this treaty would complicate matters by settling the affairs of the Seminoles on a basis other than that to be arranged for the other nations.

There has been published in the senate, upon motion of Senator Jones, of Arkansas, under the title of "Document No. 65," the agreement made by the Dawes commission with the Choctaw and Chickasaw, "with sub heads and marginal notes." Of course the text is the same as it has appeared in other prints, but the headings and marginal notes that have been added make it possible to easily and conveniently locate any particular feature of the treaty.

Judge Little has prepared and will offer, as soon as the Indian appropriation bill comes up in the house, an amendment providing that the Interstate Commerce commission be given power to fix the rates of transportation to be charged for carrying Indian supplies to the various reservations. His information is that, during the past few years these freight charges have increased to an enormous extent, and the amendment to be offered seeks to correct one of the countless abuses connected with the vast public service. John Bullette, delegate for the Delaware Indians in the Cherokee nation, will arrive in Washington in a day or two. R. C. Adams has been here since shortly after the meeting of congress. Mr. Adams is well pleased with the recognition given the Delaware in the Curtis bill, and as he expresses it, "it is good as far as it goes." The bill provides that their 157,000 acres of land be set apart to the Delaware who were on the roll at the time of purchase in 1867 and their heirs, without prejudice to the rights of those born since that time. They will ask that the bill go further and allot the fee of the 157,000 acres, and also allot to those born since 1867 full shares of the Cherokee land, as Cherokee citizens, and that their right to participate in the Cherokee funds be declared and made certain.

DUTY OF THE PUBLIC.

While officers of the law are frequently criticised for their lack of fidelity to duty, it is nevertheless a fact that sometimes the general public is too callous with reference to the real hardships that are the lot of a good officer in the discharge of what he conceives to be his duty under his obligation as an officer. The persistent hounding and capture of Brooks, who raped the little fourteen year old white girl on Big creek, last fall, by Deputy Bud Ledbetter, is a case in point. Mr. Ledbetter was assured that a deposit of \$50 had been made in a Coffeyville bank by the citizens of the neighborhood where the crime was committed, before he undertook the task of catching the perpetrator of one of the most brutal crimes ever committed in this country. Ledbetter, faithful, and brave officer that he is, paid out more money during his remarkable pursuit and capture of the rapist than he received in the way of fees, and the bonus said to have been deposited did not materialize.

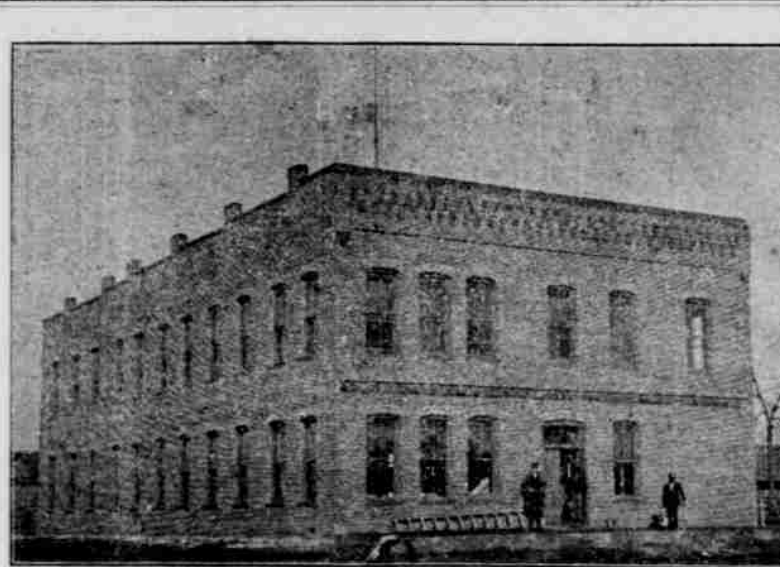


Photo by Fowler, Vinita.

United States Court Building.

While this structure built, with the idea of eventually converting to other purposes, has little of the exterior appearance of a court house, it is what the Department of Justice desired and all they would contract with Mr. Halsell to erect. Within, however, it is conveniently arranged for the purpose for which used, but at this first session under exclusive federal jurisdiction has already shown itself to be too small. A small "hold-over," not to misuse the word jail, is situated just in the rear, and during the terms of court it will be filled to overflowing. The importance of the court at Vinita really demands for its reasonable use (not to ornament the city) an establishment to cost, jail and all, \$80,000. There are pending in the Northern Judicial District more than 1,800 cases; 1,200 civil and 600 criminal, forty of the latter being capital, and Vinita has the largest volume of any of the five court seats of the district. Court is daily in session at this time, Judge John R. Thomas, presiding. John C. Anderson is the deputy clerk in charge at Vinita and Capt. G. S. White the deputy marshal, both of whom have their offices in the building.

until made up afterward by disinterested citizens. The public owes its moral and financial support to every officer of the law who tries to discharge his duties. The public must not expect too much of the courts, or of the commissioned officers of the law. Each citizen has a duty to perform, and it is especially so in this Indian country at a time when law and good government are just beginning to assert themselves. While the days of outlawry, of the Dalton, and Cook gang type, are doubtless over in this country, it should be remembered that there has been at the price of the blood of many brave men, who have gone into the hills and mountain fastnesses and hunted them down, and killed or captured them. All over this country are the graves of

ure that can make the most of even a death-dealing cyclone. Fort Smith is a magnificent town and her newspapers are the very best indications of it.

MARSHAL BENNETT is in Washington opposing the adding of another district to the Indian Territory. Bennett, like a good many others, is working in the interest of a single town, and incidentally against every other town. By the way, it is rumored that Bennett was the only court official opposing the formation of a new district. A "show down" will be called for one of these days, very soon.

Kinnison Items.

—The streams are running nicely and the farmers and stockmen are happy.

—Dr. G. W. Tilly is visiting his parents at Epperson, Tenn.

—Robert Taylor died on the 15th inst. of typhoid fever and his remains were taken

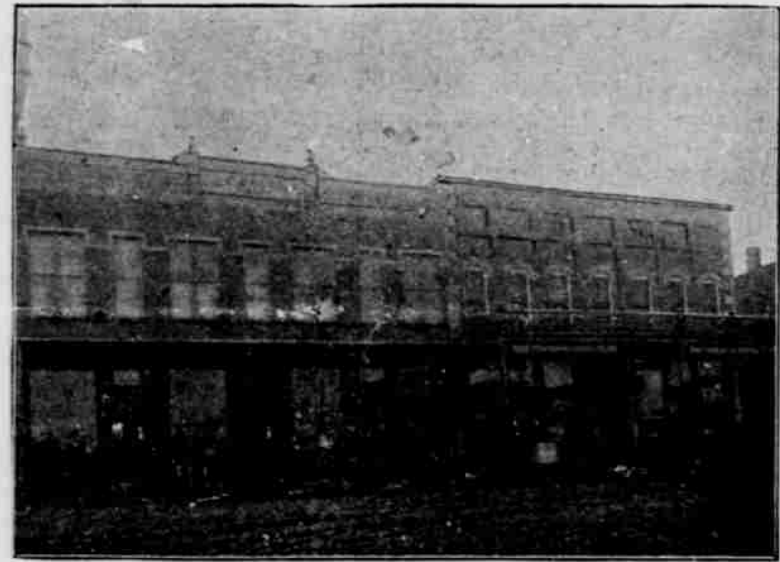


Photo by Fowler, Vinita.

W. C. Patton Block.

Of these buildings, the one to the right, occupied by Dr. A. W. Foreman as a drug and jewelry store and S. S. Cobb with dry goods, shoes and clothing, is built principally of stone and is the first structure of the kind built in the city which is now standing. It can be said truthfully that no building in the city a fourth its age is in so good condition. In the upper story is the family residence. The new structure to the left is occupied by S. J. Burns as a racket store and S. S. Cobb with a grocery stock, while above is the law office of D. W. C. Duncan.

fearless men who have yielded up their lives in trying to uphold the law, and to drive out the desperate, dare-devil bands of highwaymen that have in other years terrified this Indian country. Flushed and confident at the presence of the courts of the United States, made to feel courageous and strong under the sheltering fold of the stars and stripes that float triumphantly from temples of justice planted all over this country, we should not forget that it is the duty of every American citizen to uphold the men who are trying to enforce the law.

The newspapers of the cyclone-stricken city of Fort Smith rose grandly to the occasion and printed splendid accounts of the storm. The illustrated edition of all the papers of that city indicate energy and enterprise in a meas-

to Missouri for internment. Funeral services were conducted by the Masonic order. He leaves a wife and child very low with the same disease.

—Miss Ella Barker is attending school at Chicago; also studying music under Mrs. A. B. Crosby.

—Miss Lottie Elbert of Ellsworth, Ark., has come to make her home with her sister, Mrs. Winney Wilkins.

—Miss Emma Harlow, who has been visiting her sister, Mrs. Dr. Davis, has returned to her home at Oologah.

—Misses Lenora Kimball, Josie and Goldie Barker are enjoying a vacation at home from school.

—Louis Walker, son of George Walker, started to Vinita this morning to attend school.

—Since our jurisdiction became extinct renters here seem to think permits are of no use. Can some reader give us information on this subject?

—Miss Della Day, writing from Waterloo, Iowa, says: "My hair has been falling out for the past two years, and could get nothing to stop it until I tried Beggs hair renewer. One bottle stopped it completely. People's Drug Store."



Photo by Fowler, Vinita.

The Gray-Halsell Building.

This is one of the best buildings in the city, being substantial and withal presenting a good appearance. J. C. Gray, one of the owners, occupies the right hand room with a dry goods and grocery store; W. W. Miller has his hardware business in the center and his furniture in the left hand room. Above his stores, formerly the United States court room, he has his furniture warehouses and the room formerly occupied by the U. S. marshal, Dennis H. Wilson has his law office. The floor above Mr. Gray is occupied by J. B. Denison and J. B. Turner as law offices and by Dr. C. Bailey Bell.

Racket Store

Biggest 5 and 10c counters in the B. I. T.

You Can Buy a Tub Full Of Articles for 95 Cts.

Save money by coming in before you buy elsewhere.

Granite and Tinware of all descriptions. Lamps, Chinaware, Glassware, Queensware, Confections, Stationery, Fruit, Groceries,

Tobacco, Cigars,

Drinks

Chewing Gum.

Biggest assortment of articles to be found in any house in the territory.

No Leaders, No Credit.

Everything cheap as it can possibly be marked.

COME and save money by doing so.

Burns' Racket Store...

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Prairie Hay and

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AND NEWS STAND.

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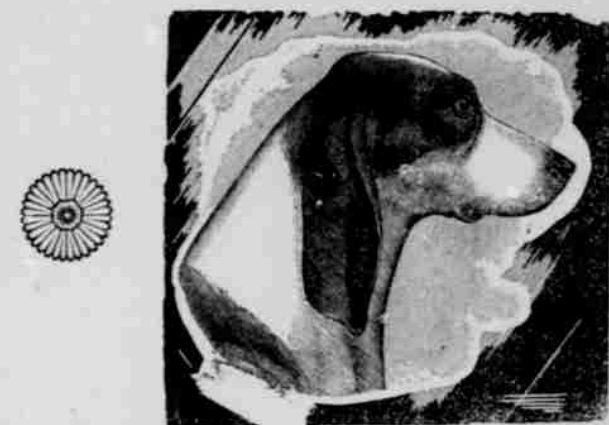
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35c Cloth bound Standard Novels for.... 14c

35c Silk Cloth Standard Novels for.... 35c

\$1.50 E. P. Bowe's works, Silk Cloth for.... 75c

25c set Marie Correll works 5 vol. for.... \$1.50

25c set Loona Doone, fine silk cloth 2 vol 14c

5c lead pencil, rubber tipped, 3for.... 35c

10c lead pencil, rubber tipped, 2 for.... 35c

10c package of envelopes for.... 7c

15c package XXXX envelopes for.... 7c

Granite Ware.

\$1.25 galvanized tea kettle, 2 gal. for.... 98c

15c Lad. Corset fine value for.... 75c

25c Ladies' Muslin Drawers for.... 25c

\$1.50 Ladies' Muslin Drawers fine value, 25c

25c wash pans.... 25c

\$1.00 roasting pans 17x11 in. for.... 25c

25c dippers for.... 25c

25c dippers for.... 25c

\$1.00 Stereoscope for.... 35c

10c Stereoscopic views for.... 4c

\$1.50 Ladies' Kid gloves for.... 25c

25c Photo Album, morocco leather, 25c

5.00 Eight Day Alarm Clock for.... 2.50

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